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Letter dated 8 November 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of Portugal, the Security Council is scheduled to hold an open debate on the subject "Maintenance of international peace and security: new challenges to international peace and security and conflict prevention" on Wednesday, 23 November 2011. In order to help steer the discussions on the subject, Portugal has prepared the attached concept note (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) José Filipe **Moraes Cabral**
Ambassador

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Annex

Concept note on new challenges to international peace and security and conflict prevention

The Security Council has in recent years devoted a substantial degree of attention to the evolving nature of challenges to international peace and security. In its presidential statement of 23 September 2010, the Council acknowledged that trend and highlighted challenges such as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, transnational organized crime, piracy, drug and human trafficking. The Council went on to say that it thus reaffirmed that international peace and security now required a more comprehensive and concerted approach (S/PRST/2010/18).

In the course of 2011, the Council held various separate meetings on a number of issues identified as being among the key growing challenges to international peace and security.

On 11 February 2011, at the initiative of Brazil, the Council held an open debate on the interdependence between security and development. The event built on previous related discussions, including the Council debate held in September 2010, and its presidential statement underlined the interlinkage between security and development and the need "to consider relevant economic, political and social dimensions of conflict" (S/PRST/2011/4).

On 7 June 2011, the Council held a high-level debate on HIV/AIDS under the agenda item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security" (S/PV.6547). Organized by Gabon, the debate led to the adoption of resolution 1983 (2011), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to consider the HIV-related needs of people living with, affected by and vulnerable to HIV, including women and girls, in his activities pertinent to the prevention and resolution of conflict, the maintenance of international peace and security, the prevention and response to sexual violence related to conflict, and post-conflict peacebuilding. This was the second time the impact of HIV/AIDS on international peace and security was discussed by the Security Council. In 2000, the United States had promoted an open debate, chaired by then United States Vice President Al Gore, which resulted in the adoption of resolution 1308 (2000). It was the first time a medical issue had been firmly placed within the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Still under Gabon's presidency, on 24 June 2011, the Council was briefed on the growing problem of transnational crime, including drug and human trafficking, in West Africa. The Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, who briefed the Council, stated that international drug trafficking was a threat to international peace and security in West Africa and stressed the need to bolster regional capacity and strengthen international cooperation to confront it.

On 20 July 2011, under the agenda item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security", Germany organized an open debate on the impact of climate change on the maintenance of international peace and security (S/PV.6587 and Resumption 1). The Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2011/15) expressing concern that sea-level rise might carry security implications on low-lying island States. It also requested the Secretary-General to include contextual information on possible security implications of climate change in his reporting on

situations on the Council's agenda. The first time the issue had been brought to the attention of the Council was during an open debate under the presidency of the United Kingdom in April 2007.

Objectives

In line with the thinking expressed in the Council's September 2010 presidential statement (S/PRST/2010/18), Portugal will hold a high-level briefing on 23 November that will take stock of the debates referred to above and look, in a comprehensive manner, at a spectrum of recently identified challenges to international peace and security. It will build upon the knowledge and understanding of the concerns emerging from the separate debates throughout the year, in order to achieve a more integrated vision.

Portugal proposes that the debate also examine possibilities for devising a framework for a regular, comprehensive and systematic focus on these issues, including, when relevant, the interlinkage between them, through which new developments, reports of the Secretary-General and briefings from relevant United Nations agencies and bodies could be channelled for concerted consideration.

1. Illicit trafficking (in arms, drugs and persons) and organized crime and their overall impact on international security

Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, will brief the Council on developments, in particular at the regional and international levels, including efforts to bring greater attention to the consequences of transnational threats on regional and international security, to mobilize political will to act and to give added support to making more effective use of United Nations instruments and tools designed to prevent and control drugs and crime.

Mr. Fedotov will also give a briefing on a system-wide United Nations response to raise awareness of and mobilize collective action against the growing and multifaceted threat of transnational organized crime and drug trafficking, and on the need for States and the United Nations system to mainstream responses to these challenges and to act preventively, by integrating such concerns into development, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and disarmament activities.

2. The impact of climate change on refugees and displaced persons

Factors related to climate change, including drought, famine, desertification, and mass population displacement and movement, can lead to insecurity and conflict. António Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, will be requested to brief the Council on the impact of climate change on refugees and displaced persons, focusing on movements of people linked to desertification, and on the implications of sea-level rise and the consequent loss of territory for some States, particularly small low-lying island States.

3. The risks for peace and security resulting from pandemics and the spread of diseases

Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, will be asked to brief the Council on the risks for peace and security resulting from

pandemics and the spread of diseases in conflict situations, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria, with a particular focus on their impact on the most vulnerable.

Towards a more systematic and concerted approach of the Security Council

The Security Council has emphasized the mutually reinforcing and interlinked nature of the root causes and drivers of these challenges to peace and security, and the need to address the issues in a comprehensive manner, by taking into account development, human rights, peace, security and certain environmental factors together (S/PRST/2010/18).

The Council has devoted a considerable amount of time and resources to discussing these challenges, but it could make better use of available information to enhance its capacity to play a preventive and mitigating role. More concerted and regular Security Council action could make a difference and bear fruit.

Questions

How can the Security Council better monitor and closely follow up relevant developments on these issues, including on the implementation of any Council decisions taken on them? How is it possible to ensure that the Council follows these issues in a more strategic way?

How can the Council better promote cooperation with the United Nations agencies and bodies dealing with the relevant matters and enhance cooperation in conflict prevention between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations?

How can the Council effectively encourage international efforts to strengthen international legal frameworks in these areas?

How is it possible to ensure that the Council is regularly updated on these issues and better prepared to respond efficiently and in a timely manner to them? What could be the role of the Secretariat in increasing awareness on these issues?

What role could civil society have in addressing these challenges and in helping to raise awareness about them?